



THE SYNTHESIS INSTITUTE | PSYCHEDELIC PRACTITIONER TRAINING

PRACTICUM PROGRAM

A Foundational Certification Program for Professionals



PRACTICUM PROGRAM

The following document overviews the ***Practicum Program*** at Synthesis for participants who are enrolled in the ***Psychedelic Practitioner Training, April and July 2022 Cohorts***. For those enrolled in either of these cohorts, this offering is included in your training and you must complete at least 50 hours of practicum experience to receive a full Psychedelic Practitioner Training Certificate of Completion.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

OVERVIEW.....	3
STEP ONE: PLACEMENT.....	5
STEP TWO: IN-PERSON EXPERIENCE.....	6
STEP THREE: PROFESSIONAL CONTINUITY WORKSHOPS.....	8
STEP FOUR: PRACTICUM ASSESSMENT.....	9
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS.....	10
What is the difference between External and Internal Practicum?.....	10
What activities do not count towards Practicum hours?.....	10
Can I fulfill my Practicum at a non-approved site?.....	11
Can I recommend a site where I would like to do a Practicum?.....	11
How does a Practicum site get approved by Synthesis?.....	11
Can I do more than one Practicum?.....	11
Are there additional costs involved in completing the Practicum?.....	11
Do I have to have experience with psychedelics before my placement?.....	12
How long do I have to complete the Psychedelic Practitioner Practicum?.....	12
Where can I learn more about, and register for Immersion?.....	12

“I honestly thought I was just ‘fulfilling hours,’ but in the end, it was one of the greatest experiences of this whole journey. I absolutely loved it, and was actually sad when my hours were completed, as I enjoyed every single second of it. “

— PREVIOUS PRACTICUM PARTICIPANT

OVERVIEW

The **Practicum Program** has been designed to support participants through hands-on, in-person experiences in which to apply learnings from the Digital Training to real world contexts. Working with experts in the field and 1:1 mentorship will not only help prepare you for your own practice, but also broaden your connections and network of professionals and organizations across the psychedelic field.

The **Practicum Program** Includes:

- A diverse marketplace of external practicum sites for selection, including retreat centers, clinical sites, and harm reduction organizations around the world. **Bonus:** can enroll in a second external practicum placement at no additional cost.
- Two years of **Professional Continuity Workshops**.
- Option to acquire twenty-five (25) hours of practicum experience at a Synthesis-led **Immersion Retreat**.
- **Practicum** Completion Certificate.

About Previous Communications:

Previously, we delineated between two Practicum tracks: (1) On-site or Internal Practicum at a Synthesis retreat in the Netherlands, or (2) External Practicum with a Partner Organization, inclusive of three virtual coursework modules.

On-site/internal practicum will still be an option for all who have paid (and not been refunded) for **Immersion**, which will be taking place in 2024. If you attend **Immersion**, you will receive twenty-five (25) hours towards the practicum requirements.

We ask that in addition or instead, all students still engage in External Practicum with a Partner Organization, the details of which are covered below. External Practicum can take place either in addition to **Immersion**, or on its own, provided that you reach a minimum of fifty (50) hours total of practicum experience.

Please also note that the **Practicum Program** as it now stands does not include any virtual coursework modules. Upon reevaluation of this offering, and considering that our students have

already sat for a year of online, asynchronous lectures, we wanted to give more in the way of a collective organic learning experience.

Thus we are announcing the **Professional Continuity Workshops**, a live, facilitated teaching and learning session in which a real case study is reviewed under the guidance of an expert in the field. Read more about this in [Step Three](#) below.



The beautiful grounds of New Eden, where one of the **Immersion** experiences and Internal Practicum took place in Summer of 2023. If you attend **Immersion**, you will receive twenty-five (25) hours towards the practicum requirements. [Learn more and register for Immersion here.](#)

STEP ONE: PLACEMENT

After completing the digital portion of the *Psychedelic Practitioner Training*, you will be invited to review and select your **Practicum Program** site through our online marketplace.

While you do have three years to complete the practicum portion of this program, we recommend that you begin this process soon after digital course completion to best be able to integrate the knowledge of the digital training. Additionally, enrollment in the *Professional Continuity Workshops* is scheduled to begin in Fall of 2023.

Browse a variety of sites in the **Practicum Marketplace** and select the option that interests you based on location, substances offered, lead facilitator, additional costs, calendar time required to complete your hours, and more. This process allows you to choose settings and medicine/substance that best suit your interests and career directions (e.g., clinical sites, research sites, retreat sites, or harm reduction sites).

SYNTHESIS PRACTICUM MARKETPLACE (coming soon)

Once you have selected a practicum site, you will be invited to apply. The site manager will review your application and if it is approved, you will be connected directly with the site manager. Please note that the cost of travel is not included in the program, and some sites may have additional charges for room and board during your stay.

“The experience for me really anchored the principle of sitting, not guiding, and simply holding space for someone coming in, without trying to fix or change their experience, or even pretending that we as a guide know what is needed. It showed me that with genuine respect, curiosity, and care for the person in front of me, they will know what they need and their inner experience unfolds exactly as it needs to.”

— PREVIOUS PRACTICUM PARTICIPANT

STEP TWO: IN-PERSON EXPERIENCE

At Synthesis, we recognize that students who are working toward becoming practitioners are at many different stages of development with regards to skill, education, personal experience with psychedelics, and professional practice. At the very foundation of learning as practitioners is our ability to observe, witness without reacting, and listen carefully. Beginning to facilitate and/or to hold space with clients involves careful, slow practice.

It can be quite a commitment for a **Practicum** site to allow a student that they do not know into a carefully created and private setting of a person's psychedelic experience. While we recommend that all sites begin with allowing **Practicum** students to witness and carefully observe, and/or hold space in all encounters with participants, some sites will allow the student to engage with participants or do more than just witnessing and careful observation. Please know that this will vary from site to site.



A variety of Practicum sites: Soltara Healing Center in Costa Rica (L) and Nushama Wellness Center in New York City (R).

Your participation in psychedelic sessions is determined by each practicum site and may depend on many factors. It is important to establish specific parameters for your experience with the site supervisor before you agree to the placement. Be prepared to use the practices of witnessing and careful observation of all sessions and for the duration of your **Practicum** experience.

Depending on the site and circumstances, **Practicum** hours may include:

- Preparation sessions with clients
- Preparing the space for a session
- Psychedelic sessions
- Retreat team debrief sessions
- Integrations sessions
- Site staff meeting time
- Supervisor meeting time, including prior and/or after the practicum's official start date
- General operations and programmatic elements, such as: cleaning, clearing, and preparing different rooms and spaces for exercises and sharing circles, setting up the altar, preparing the ceremonial space, etc.

Our hope is that you will gain insights and learn from other professionals in the field who are working in safe and thoughtful ways. Your site will also cover ethical considerations, including maintaining confidentiality, respecting privacy, adhering to professional codes of conduct, and practicing ethical decision-making.

“The opportunity to learn with a master supervisor was humbling.

The staff was well trained, their method of overseeing multiple simultaneous, separate psychedelic sessions was technically useful. Excellent collaborative environment gave rich examples of ways to build future practice.”

— PREVIOUS PRACTICUM PARTICIPANT

STEP THREE: PROFESSIONAL CONTINUITY WORKSHOPS

Community is a crucial part of the learning journey for any professional, which is what we will focus on in newly developed **Professional Continuity Workshops**. A similar version of these workshops ran for the Synthesis community for 12 months in 2021 and were consistently praised for their relevance in ongoing professional development.

These exclusive 90-minute live gatherings are scheduled to begin in the Fall of 2023 and will be open to those who are in the process fulfilling their practicum requirements for the **Psychedelic Practitioner Training**, offering an opportunity to connect with and learn from others in the field.

Hosted by expert facilitators, researchers, and professionals from the global psychedelic space, the workshops will center around a specific question or case study. Those present will engage in rich processing of the case study in alignment with the Synthesis pedagogy of “Many ways of Knowing” and oriented toward honing specific skills.

Each Workshop Includes:

- A specific and practical case study from expert psychedelic professionals, often lifted directly from their experience.
- Break-out rooms in which participants can explore the topic in small groups, discuss how they might react/respond to the situation, and deepen professional relationships.
- Presentations from other students who have completed their practicum
- Opportunities to ask questions of the host and dialog as a group

These gatherings tie in the learning from all nine modules of the Digital Training, as well as the hands-on experience of the practicum to truly round out your training.

Example topics include:

- Preparing, Working With, and Integrating Resistance
- Screening and On-Site Protocols
- De-escalating Aggression in Ceremony
- Projections
- Expectations of Ego Death
- Integration Resistance and Non-Experience

STEP FOUR: PRACTICUM ASSESSMENT

Following the completion of the in-person practicum experience, students will undergo a final evaluation and assessment to gauge overall achievement of learning objectives and application of practical skills. This assessment is designed to allow you to reflect meaningfully on your experiences, showcase professional growth, and demonstrate understanding of best practices in the field.

Practicum Assessment consists of:

- An evaluation by the on-site supervisor reviewing your time on site.
- A self-assessment form, reflecting on your experience.
- A presentation in a **Professional Continuity Workshop** providing an overview of your practicum experience and learning objectives, reflection on the experience, and how it integrates with the content of the digital training.

The final assessment and presentation for the **Practicum Program** are not intended to evaluate or judge, but rather to be useful to your own professional development, in the spirit of the Warrior Exam. They are an opportunity to reflect on your learning outcomes, showcase practical skills, and receive valuable feedback for future professional growth.

The site supervisor evaluation and self-assessments will evaluate your growth and abilities in the following areas:

- Ability establish rapport and build trust with co-facilitators and clients
- Provide a calm, supportive, and non-judgmental presence
- Demonstrate comfort with not-knowing
- Empathy and compassion
- Attention and presence
- Active listening
- Verbal communication (clear, supportive, pertinent)
- Capacity for engaging in adequate self-care (if applicable)
- Timekeeping and attendance
- Willingness and enthusiasm
- Initiative
- Efficacy at completing tasks set
- Ability to work with others

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the difference between External and Internal Practicum?

This document concerns what was previously referred to as External Practicum with a Partner Organization, and is now called the **Practicum** program. Internal practicum will be taking place at **Immersion**.

Previously, we delineated between two tracks: (1) On-site or Internal Practicum at Synthesis, or (2) External Practicum with a Partner Organization, inclusive of three virtual coursework modules.

On-site/internal practicum will still be an option for all who have paid for (and not been refunded for) **Immersion**, which took place in 2023. We will notify you when more dates in 2024 are added and you will be able to register on one of your choice. If you attend **Immersion**, you will receive twenty-five (25) hours towards the required fifty (50) practicum requirements.

What activities do not count towards Practicum hours?

- **Personal experience with psychedelic medicines.** This includes participating in a retreat or clinical trial as a patient / participant.
- **Your own professional practice with psychedelic medicine.** Synthesis' **Psychedelic Practitioner Practicum** is designed to support you in gaining experience at a new site, observing how practitioners are conducting their work in the field, and receiving supervision from a professional in the field.
- **Prior training or work hours.** Since **Practicum** sites need to be formally assessed by the Synthesis Practicum team, a contract needs to be stipulated, and sites are asked to assess students during their **Practicum**, it is not possible to accept practicum hours retrospectively.
- **Non-psychedelic training.** For example, companies and institutions that train students to work with altered-states of consciousness without the direct use of psychedelic medicines.

Can I fulfill my **Practicum** at a non-approved site?

No. In order to follow legal and ethical standards, we require that you complete your **Practicum** placement at a pre-approved site. If there is a site you are interested in working with that is not currently in our marketplace, please read the next question.

Can I recommend a site where I would like to do a **Practicum**?

If you wish to be placed with a site we do not currently have on our list, you can submit a suggestion by contacting Maya Albert at malbert@synthesisretreat.com. Provide the name of the site, their website, and the email address of the potential supervisor. We will contact the organization to see if they are open to the proposal. If they are, they will need to go through our vetting process and sign a contract with us before you can apply for a **Practicum** placement with them.

How does a **Practicum** site get approved by Synthesis?

We developed an interview process to assess whether practicum sites are a good fit for the **Practicum Program**. While we cannot ultimately guarantee the quality of a site's work, we aim to verify ethical alignment and they agree to collaboratively work toward ethical standards in the field. Students may also have a lot to offer a practicum site. We envision this as a symbiotic relationship with possibilities for learning and growth for both students and sites.

Can I do more than one **Practicum**?

For the July and April 2022 cohorts, we are offering an additional **Practicum** placement as an added bonus. After completion of your first experience, you may reenter the placement process again. As a reminder, to fulfill the fifty (50) required hours of Practicum experience, it is recommended that students attend **Immersion** to complete their hours.

Are there additional costs involved in completing the **Practicum**?

This varies for each site, but some do ask for a fee for accommodations and food. We will share this information with you before you fill out the form indicating your interest. Sites also do not cover travel expenses.

For those attending **Immersion**, accommodations and food will be provided. You will be responsible for all travel expenses to and from the retreat site and any other ancillary expenses (e.g., travel insurance).

Do I have to have experience with psychedelics before my placement?

Each external site will have their own requirements which you can review before applying to a site. Some sites will require minimum experience with psychedelics, while others won't.

How long do I have to complete the **Psychedelic Practitioner Practicum**?

You will have three (3) years from the start of your training with Synthesis to complete your **Practicum**.

Where can I learn more about, and register for **Immersion**?

Attending **Immersion** is a great opportunity to get twenty-five (25) of the required **Practicum** hours, as well as bond and connect with other participants and our wonderful Retreat Team. [Learn more and register for **Immersion** here.](#)

Contact

practicum@synthesisinstitute.com